

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 OES-03 /085 W

----- 059582

R 300940Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9231

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

ZMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5190

RQKVKIAMEMBASSY RANGOON 466

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 6411

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, BG

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN

REF: DACCA 6361

1. I MET WITH MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN, DEPUTY CHIEF  
MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, TO OBTAIN  
HIS ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE OUR LAST SIT-DOWN  
CONVERSATION ABOUT A MONTH AGO. (THAT WHICH FOLLOWS  
WAS SUMMARIZED IN REF A.)

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2. INDIAN-BDG RELATIONS. ZIA SAID BDG HAD GAINED FROM

THE RECENT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND HE WAS PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL FOR USG ASSISTANCE. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT INDIA WAS CONTINUING SOME OF ITS ACTIVITIES AGAINST BDG, BUT BDG DIPLOMATS WERE RELUCTANT TO SPELL OUT DETAILS FOR THE INDIANS BECAUSE IT WOULD BE "EMBARRASSING." MEANWHILE, ZIA SAID INDIAN BSF STILL HAS CAMPS ALONG THE NORTHERN BORDER WHERE THEY TRAIN PERSONNEL, INCLUDING TIGER SIDDIQUI'S GROUP. THE LATTER IS AN INDIAN TOOL AND A CRIMINAL WHO CANNOT EVEN GO BACK TO HIS HOME DISTRICT. ALTHOUGH MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT INDIAN SUPPORT HAS BEEN ACQUIRED FROM FORMER SIDDIQUI FOLLOWERS WHO HAVE SURRENDERED TO THE BDG, AT THE RECENT GOI-BDG BORDER TALKS GOI DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THESE ACTIVITIES. ZIA ADDED THAT THERE WERE OTHER CAMPS AROUND ARGATALA ON THE TRIPURA SIDE, AND ALSO THAT FORMER QTE NOTORIOUS UNQTE MP'S WERE NOW MAINTAINING OFFICES IN CALCUTTA FROM WHICH THEY WERE PLANNING SABOTAGE OF THIS GOVERNMENT.

3. ZIA SAID BY SUCH ACTIONS THE INDIANS WERE CREATING PROBLEMS FOR THEMSELVES. THEY WERE SUPPORTING MISCREANTS WHO WERE ALSO IN CONTACT WITH INDIAN MISCREANTS WHO THEMSELVES WERE ANTI-GOI. ON THE MORE POSITIVE SIDE ZIA ADMITTED THAT THERE WAS LESS ANTI-BANGLADESH PROPAGANDA IN INDIAN PRESS AND THAT SENIOR GOI OFFICIALS ALSO WERE NOT OPENLY CRITICAL. NOW THEY WERE ONLY EXPRESSING THEIR CONTINUING CONCERNS IN A LOW KEY.

4. AS REGARDS INDIA'S REITERATED CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNAL TROUBLES, ZIA SAID THE BDG WAS DOING EVERYTHING IT COULD TO PREVENT THESE BUT HE EXPECTED THE GOI TO BE UP TO SOMETHING IF ONLY BECAUSE THEY TALKED SO MUCH ABOUT IT. THEY SHOULD NOT TRY TO CASH IN ON COMMUNAL ISSUES BECAUSE THESE COULD REACT ON THE COMMUNAL SCENE IN INDIA.

5. ZIA SAID GOI MUST UNDERSTAND BDG KNOWS THEY HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN BY BECOMING INDIA'S ENEMY; MOREOVER BDG'S STABILITY HELPS KEEP THEIR EASTERN SIDE PROBLEM-FREE. ANY INVASION OF BANGLADESH WOULD CAUSE THEM TO LOSE THEIR EASTERN AREAS AND EVEN THE SOUTHERN INDIAN STATES WOULD

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BEGIN TO BREAK AWAY AND SEEK THEIR INDEPENDENCE. ONCE SUCH A PROCESS STARTS, HE SAID, THE WHOLE SUBCONTINENT WILL HAVE HAD IT. IN SUMMARY ZIA ADMITTED HE WAS LESS ANXIOUS ABOUT THE SITUATION THAN HE WAS A MONTH AGO, BUT THIS WAS AT BEST ONLY A SHORT-TERM ESTIMATE.

6. DOMESTIC POLITICAL. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE INTERIM CHARACTER OF THIS GOVERNMENT AND HOW MUCH HE ENJOYED THE

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SIDES OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, ZIA SMILINGLY REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A MOST INTERESTING (HE MEANT LEADING) QUESTION; AND THEN EVADED AN INTERESTING ANSWER. HE SAID HE ENJOYED WORKING ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND HAD ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THEIR RELEVANCE FOR A MILITARY ORGANIZATION AS WELL. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE HE ONLY SAID THEY WERE COMMITTED TO ELECTIONS BUT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHEN THESE COULD BE HELD. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE CLEARER IN A MONTH OR TWO. ABOUT HIS OWN CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY, AND CURRENT RUMORS THAT THE ENLISTED MEN WERE MAKING DIFFICULT DEMANDS, E.G., TO BRING SOME OF THE EXILED OFFICERS BACK FROM BENGAZI, ZIA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THESE RUMORS, BUT THEY WERE NOT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE EXILED OFFICERS KNEW THIS WAS NOT THE RIGHT TIME FOR THEIR RETURN. HE SAID ONE OF THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING MORALE IN THE MILITARY WAS THE NEED FOR NEW EQUIPMENT.

7. DOMESTIC ECONOMIC. ZIAUR SAID THEIR PRINCIPAL AND MOST DIFFICULT TASKS WERE TO CREATE MORE JOBS AND TO GET IDLE MONEY BACK INTO INVESTMENT AND TRADE. HE FELT SMUGGLING WAS BEING CURTAILED AND DECISIONS HAD BEEN MADE REGARDING INVESTMENT POLICY AND LIBERALIZATION OF THE NATIONALIZED SECTOR THAT SHOULD PLEASE AID DONORS, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO SEE RESULTS. HE ALSO THOUGHT THE BUREAUCRACY WAS WORKING BETTER AND WITH MORE SELF CONFIDENCE THAN BEFORE.

8. I MENTIONED THAT US AND SOME OTHER DONORS WERE MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT THE INADEQUACY OF FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. ZIAUR CONCEDED THERE HAS BEEN TOO MUCH TALK AND TOO LITTLE ORGANIZATION ON THE GROUND. HE SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD GRAVITY AND URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM, AS WELL AS RIGHT OF DONORS TO BE CRITICAL OF INADEQUATE USE OF THEIR INPUTS. HE SAID WE WOULD SOON SEE IMPROVED  
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ORGANIZATION THAT WOULD GIVE THIS A MAJOR BOOST.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 OES-03 /085 W

----- 067799

R 300940Z DEC 75

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9232

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 6411

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

9. COMMENT. A SHORT, SLIGHT, SOFT-SPOKEN MAN WITH A  
PENCHANT FOR COLORFUL DRESS SHIRTS BY NIGHT AND CAMOUFLAGE  
BATTLE DRESS BY DAY, ZIA HAS OVER PAST MONTH ADDED THE  
RESPECT OF MOST OF THE SENIOR DIPLOMATS IN DACCA TO HIS  
GENERALLY FAVORABLE REPUTATION AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE.  
THERE IS NOW WIDE AGREEMENT AMONG THESE DIPLOMATS THAT HE  
IS WORKING HARD AT HIS WIDE-RANGING RESPONSIBILITIES  
WITHOUT DISPLAYING ANY DISCERNIBLE POLITICAL OR DICTATORIAL  
AMBITIONS. INDEED, FOR MANY HE ALMOST PERSONIFIES WHAT IS  
DESCRIBED AS A RELATIVELY BENIGN VARIETY OF MARTIAL LAW  
ADMINISTRATION. SOME SKEPTICAL BANGALEES, HOWEVER,  
HAVING LIVED UNDER MARTIAL LAW IN PAST, THINK HE MAY  
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DEVELOP A LIKING FOR POLITICAL POWER.

10. IN THIS PRIVATE MEETING HE WAS COOL, PRECISE AND FOR  
THE MOST PART RELAXED. HE WAS NATURALLY MOST COMFORTABLE  
REHEARSING THE POLITICAL/MILITARY ASPECTS OF BDG-GOI  
RELATIONS, WHILE SHOWING SIGNS OF GENERALLY UNDERSTANDING  
DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ZIA, HOWEVER, WOULD ONNLY  
GRUDGINGLY ADMIT TO ANY IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-BANGALEE

RELATIONS; HE APPEARS TO SUBSCRIBE WHOLEHEARTEDLY TO THE COMMON BANGALEE MISTRUST OF INDIA. HE WAS MOST CAREFUL WHEN COMMENTING ON RUMORS OF DIFFICULTIES IN THE MILITARY. AS BEST AS WE CAN RECONSTRUCT THE CHRONOLOGY, HE WAS DISSEMBLING BY REFUSING EVEN TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE WAS EITHER IN THE MIDDLE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE JAWANS OR ON THE WAY TO THE SETTLEMENT (OF UNCERTAIN DURATION) WHICH HAS BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED. THE LINGERING REPORTS THAT ALL MAY NOT BE PATCHED UP IN THE MILITARY -- THIS WEEK'S RUMORS RELATE TO A POSSIBLY WIDENING RIFT BETWEEN THE EXPATRIATE OFFICERS AND THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE LIBERATION WAR -- ARE DISCOMFITING BECAUSE ZIA REMAINS THE KEY MAN IN A VERY SHAKY GOVERNMENT.  
CHESLAW

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## Message Attributes

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